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DISASTER MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS: PERSPECTIVES FOR POLICY AND DESIGN

Abstract

Natural and manmade disasters continue to haunt the mankind and sustainable development inflicting enormous losses on the nations and the world at large. This is evidenced by the disastrous events that struck different parts of the world in recent times that caused devastations to both human lives and properties. The geo-climatic and socio-political conditions of certain continents/sub-continents make those regions more vulnerable to both natural and man- made disasters.

Considerable progress achieved by the international community in space technologies to monitor natural and manmade calamities has been lending a helping hand to the nations and agencies in the management and relief operations. However, a generic global character and regional/local plans and coordination at the organisational, technical and information levels are of high priority to maximise the benefits of space technology and reach the right people in the right time.

The analysis of disasters that struck different parts of the world shows that, while these devastating happenings cause an indelible scar on the livelihood and times of the affected, they also help the managers of such disasters to learn the lessons about the policies and systems that worked in the desired manner and those that didn't. The cases of some of the disasters in Southeast Asia demonstrated the need for enhanced coordination, capacity building, and transparency. Even more importantly, the timely delivery of aid can often mean the difference between life and death for disaster victims. Similar is the case with respect to disasters and the manner in which they were predicted, managed and mitigated in Haiti, Japan or other nations.

The paper presents the results of an analytic study of the National Disaster management systems existing in different regions/countries of the globe in terms of their vision, practicality and political commitment towards the policy and frameworks; the culture of Preparedness, Prevention and Management Mitigation imparted into the people; and also the technological insights that are useful for designing and betterment of the systems.

The paper will attempt to suggest methods to conceive and design effective and holistic systems that meet the desired needs of the nations and also methods to improve dealing more effectively with future disasters in countries where such systems are already implemented/being implemented.